

# SHADES OF THE PAST

Synopsis of Chapters Already Published

Robert Graham, a young New York lawyer, has, under apparently compromising circumstances, procured and secured a position for Hilda Montgomery, a girl deserted by the man who promised to marry her, and divorced by her own people. He is in love, however, with Gladys Corlett, the millinaire's daughter, whom he has rescued from a hotel fire. William Warwick, Corlett's acrimoniously nephew, wants to marry Gladys himself, and is in vain endeavoring to get her away from Robert. Graham, and the young people become engaged. Old man Corlett approves the match, but consents to a delay of two years, and upon his advice Robert starts in business for himself, taking Hilda Montgomery as his chief assistant. He prospers, and in due time urges Gladys to name the day for their marriage, but she puts him off, and appears greatly agitated over the government's investigation into a case with which her father is connected. Graham, a certain missing paper is brought to light, old man Corlett will be indicted, and probably sent to prison. Graham suspects Warwick has the paper, and is using it to blackmail Gladys into breaking her engagement and marrying him. She flatly denies this, and Hilda, who is the impression that she is really in love with Warwick. He rushes from the house in a rage, and does not come to himself until hours later when he finds himself in his own office, washing his hands. Then he returns to Gladys to make another appeal, but while he is talking to her, officers, accompanied by Warwick, appear to arrest him for the brutal murder of Hilda Montgomery.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### "A PLAIN, UNVARNISHED TALE."

FOR a moment everyone in the room recoiled. So terrible is the crime of murder that normal human nature involuntarily shrinks from contact even with the man who is only accused of it.

Then Corlett took a quick step forward. "What!" he gasped, glancing incredulously toward Robert's two custodians. "Yes, it's as Mr. Warwick says, sir," one of them nodded back; "and I guess it's straight enough against him. The girl's body, all cut up into little pieces and jammed into a big double suitcase has been fished out of the river where he tossed it off a ferry boat."

"Robert Graham committed such a heinous crime as that? This man here?" demanded Corlett, still refusing to believe.

"This is the man, all right, sir. There's no mistake being made. Why, what more proof is needed than this here coat, which you yourself heard him admit was his?"

Ah, yes, that coat. The blood-smeared coat and the totally unsatisfactory explanation Robert had given for its condition, Corlett felt back a step, perplexed, unhappy, mopping his brow. It seemed an impossible thing to believe of Graham; yet—there was the coat. This argument, however, naturally had less effect upon Gladys, ignorant of the part previously played by the tell-tale garment, and she stood forward, paused in confusion as she stood forward. At Warwick's enunciation of the dreadful charge she had clutched at a chairback for support, and her eyes had gone wide with terror.

But now, although she was deadly pale, she faced the officers without trembling. "Would you mind telling me," she questioned one of them, and her voice, if low, was firm and steady. "Would you mind telling me the circumstances of this crime and the exact reasons you have for connecting Mr. Graham with so awful a thing?"

Sergeant Talcott noted the elegance of her luxurious tea gown, her jewels and rings—all evidence of the sheltering care with which she was guarded—and shuffled his feet. "Well, I don't know, ma'am," he faltered, "that a lady like you ought to hear."

"A lady!" she sneered the word. "I am a woman, I tell you, and this man was to have been my husband. I have a right to know the full details of anything which so closely affects him. But as the sergeant still seemed reluctant, she turned to Warwick.

"You will not be so careful as to what I may or may not hear, I am sure. And besides," she added, making no attempt to conceal her hostility toward him, "I am certain you will tell the worst there is to know."

Warwick gave a little start as she addressed him directly. Since pointing out Graham to the officers he had stood apart, seemingly uninterested, chewing noisily at the corner of his mustache. It was noticeable also that he did not present that trim, well-combed appearance which usually characterized him. His attire was rumpled, and in low and haggard, and his hair streaked down across his brow.

So, too, although he tried to speak in his customary cynical drawl in response to Gladys, the result was only a miserable failure. "You flatter me, my dear cousin," he twisted his lips into a wry smile, "by ascribing to me such ardent devotion to truth; for it is the truth, the simple facts, that form the worst possible indictment which can be brought against your fiancé."

"Since you have asked me for them, briefly, they are as follows: 'This man met Miss Montgomery shortly after 5 o'clock this afternoon—either by appointment or not is not known—at the circle entrance to the park, and accompanied her to her boarding house on West Seventieth street, left her then, and although his exact movements from that time are uncertain, he was seen and recognized between 6 and 7 o'clock once more in the park and loitering near a thick clump of shrubbery, a little distance in from the Seventy-second street entrance, apparently waiting for some one. His hat was pulled down over his eyes, and he seemed to wish to avoid observation."

"Meanwhile Miss Montgomery, having changed her gown, came downstairs about 6 o'clock, and informing her landlady that she expected to be out to dinner, left the house. Her subsequent movements are likewise unknown, but it may be readily inferred from the sequel that she met Graham by appointment at the spot where he was waiting."

"Neither of them is positively identified, having left the house, but it is certain that Graham did, since he was seen later at divers places, and is here now. 'I say positively identified,' too, you will note, for we know by two witnesses that a man resembling him in general characteristics and carrying a heavy double suit case did come out the Seventy-second street gate shortly after 7 o'clock and take an Eighth avenue car downtown."

"At about 8 o'clock a policeman going off duty and accompanied by a friend passed the clump of shrubbery previously mentioned, and had his curiosity aroused by the peculiar behavior of the friend's dog, which ran in and out from under the bushes, barking at a furious rate, and refusing to be coaxed away from the spot."

"At length, led to believe that something might be wrong, and deciding to investigate, the policeman crawled in, and was horrified to find evidence of a recent atrocious tragedy."

"There was no corpse or any sign of a struggle, but a thin line of broken branches showed where the dead or unconscious victim had been dragged in from the path after being strangled, and the ground within the little copse was soaked with a great pool of fresh blood. The only thing found was a small white handkerchief lying close at hand, which it is supposed the murderer had overlooked in his flight, and which bore the name, Hilda Montgomery."

Warwick paused a moment, whether

By CHARLES CAREY

—AUTHOR OF—

"A Woman to Win," "The Van Suyden Sapphires," Etc.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### SHADES OF THE PAST.

ROBERT had not said a word during all this time. He had been so shocked, so horrified by the news that Hilda was dead—murdered!—that at first he had scarcely heeded his own predicament at all.

His arrest was absurd, some malicious scheme worked up by Warwick, he thought, and outside of the natural unpleasant thrill at being taken into custody on a homicide charge, he felt no fear. The idea of his culpability was too easily disproven. But as Warwick launched into his story a sudden doubt had assailed him, connecting the blood in his veins and almost causing him to lose consciousness.

This man, Mr. Miss Montgomery shortly after 5 o'clock this afternoon," Warwick said.

Graham looked up quickly, as though to deny the assertion, and then let his eyes fall in confusion. Shortly after 5 o'clock! Where had he been shortly after 5 o'clock? What had he been doing? He could not answer. At 5 o'clock the dog had slipped in his brain, which had not again resumed its functions until he found himself at 9 in his office washing his hands. The interim was a blank.

Could it be, then, that he had met Hilda at the circle entrance to the park, and had accompanied her to her boarding house? He retained absolutely no memory of such an episode; yet Warwick spoke as though the facts were certain, accurately established.

Were there other things, then, which he had done and did not remember? Could it even be—but no, no, no! He absolutely refused to admit such a possibility, even to himself.

Thenceforth he hung fascinated upon the gruesome recital of events, and frequently there occurred, that chilling doubt—that doubt which "could not be"—and yet enfolded him and froze his heart with its ghastly possibilities.

Apparently, as he could gather from Warwick's story, in those passages where the actor was positively identified as himself, he had acted in a perfectly normal and ordinary way, without raising the slightest question as to his rationality. He seemingly knew who he was and how to take care of himself all the time, yet he had not the faintest recollection of a thing he had done.

All his other faculties had gone on just the same, only his memory had failed him. In such a mental lapse might not deep hidden traits and idiosyncrasies of character, which at other times he did not even suspect, come to the surface? In other words, he put the shuddering question to himself as Corlett had earlier asked it in another way: At such a time might Dr. Jekyll become Mr. Hyde?

Yet all this time that this appalling suggestion was struggling in his brain, and while he shrank in sick horror from the details of Warwick's grisly story, he was also mechanically taking note of points and discrepancies which might aid in a defense.

Precious few there were of these he had to admit; and yet there were one or two which he deemed might serve as a peg on which to hang a jurymen's sense of "reasonable doubt."

He made no mention of these faint gleams of hope, however, nor did he offer a word in reply when Warwick had finished his arraignment.

He knew, as a lawyer, that this was not the place to argue his case or present a defense. At present and until the time of his trial the less he said the better.

Consequently he was almost tempted to cry out in protest, when upon Warwick's conclusion old Corlett took up the plea Graham regarded as his strongest, and blundered into the query:

"But what possible motive can be alleged for such a deed? The relations between this girl and Graham were of the friendliest character. She was his private secretary and valued assistant."

Warwick grinned in a way that was not good to see.

"Yes," he said, significantly, "his private secretary and valued assistant, and—more!"

The bands of iron restraint which Robert had placed upon himself broke at that.

"Liar," he exclaimed, and wrenching himself free from his captors before they knew what he was about he struck the other a smashing blow squarely on the nose.

Warwick reeled and went down before its impact; but ere Robert could follow it up the two detectives had thrown themselves upon him and dragged him back.

His adversary slowly regained his feet, but made no effort to resent the blow. Instead he stood looking at Graham with a peculiar, indescribable expression, and holding his handkerchief to his forehead as though he were wiping blood from his brow.

Now, for the first time, too, he addressed himself directly to the prisoner.

"Liar," he said, slowly. "Do you mean to deny, Graham, that on the very night you came to know my cousin here—on the night of the Park Avenue Hotel fire, to be exact—you had this Hilda Montgomery in your room at Miss Bowen's boarding house until 6 o'clock last morning?"

Robert heard Gladys give a sharp gasp, a faint out of the tail of his eye saw her lean forward with clasped hands to catch his answer.

The room seemed to be swimming around him. That old, half-forgotten incident which he had deemed dead and buried should crop up now to confront him and blacken the memory of the dead girl!

He must equivocate, must lie somehow, both for his own sake and for hers. Was this Warwick Satan himself to have laid bare this secret which he thought none shared save Hilda and himself?

Then as this thought came, there flashed upon him an old axiom which he had seen somewhere, that the only successful way to fight Beelzebub was with the truth.

"Yes," he said to himself, "the truth never harmed any one. It is only a lie which can hurt."

With a sudden resolution, he flung back his head, and met the other's malicious, taunting glance full and fair.

"No, I do not deny what you say," he answered quietly. "It is all so."

"Then do you deny that immediately thereafter you bought her clothes, and paid him?"

"I loaned her a small amount of money for those purposes."

"It is always a loan when one gives to a lady," sneered Warwick.

Robert only pressed his lips more tightly together and made no answer.

"You do it deny, of course," pursued Warwick, "the well known facts that you secured her a position in the office where you worked, and that when you set up for yourself took her with you; that you have, in fact, consistently, throughout her business career

been to her a guide, philosopher, and friend?"

"I deny nothing of the essential facts you have named."

"Then," said Warwick, the venomous twist deepening about his mouth, "I think my case is proved."

Old man Corlett shuffled his feet uneasily and coughed. "There is really nothing more to say, is there?" he observed significantly. "Gladys, my dear, don't you think you had better retire?" But his daughter sat like a marble statue.

"Gladys, stay where you are," Graham spoke with a sudden bitter authority, for his heart was very full; "and all the rest of you listen to me. There is one thing to say, and, although I had sworn that not a word relating to this case should pass my lips to-night, I am going to say it."

"It is simply this, that Hilda Montgomery was a pure, true, innocent woman, and whoever breathes, utters, or even thinks a word to the contrary is a liar, slanderer and calumniator."

There was a moment's silence; then old man Corlett muttered, "Humph!" so to voice, but in a way that expressed volumes of incredulity.

Quick as a flash William Warwick turned upon him, his dark face writhing with passion.

"That one 'Humph' has cost you your liberty," he exclaimed vengefully. "Remember that when you are rotting in the penitentiary!"

Then, snatching up his hat, he fled from the house, as if all the furies were in pursuit.

The Continuation of This Story Will Be Found in Tomorrow's Edition of The Times.

BRYAN AND JOHNSON  
AUTO RIDE TOGETHER

St. Paul Populace Marvels at Sight of Fellow-Democrats in Auto.

ST. PAUL, Minn., July 9.—Four arms with but a single steering wheel, two minds beating each other, with the spectacle presented to St. Paulites when Gov. John A. Johnson took William Jennings Bryan for a sight-seeing tour in the governor's big automobile.

St. Paul looked and marveled. Through the principal streets the distinguished pair motored, bowing and smiling. This is the first time in two years that distance has not lent enchantment to the view, each of the other. Mr. Bryan came to St. Paul yesterday to attend the convention of the Christian Endeavorers and Intimate to Mayor Daniel A. Lawler that he would not refuse to meet Governor Johnson if they should happen to be on the same side of the street.

This was taken as an intimation that Mr. Bryan would like to see Governor Johnson, and the meeting was arranged through Frank A. Day, the governor's private secretary. The governor called for his distinguished fellow-Democrat with his big machine and Mr. Bryan climbed into the front seat with him.

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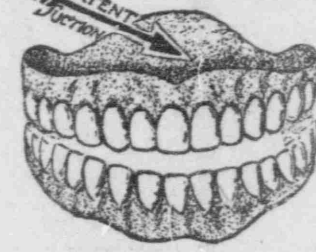
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